

*Legislative Corner –*

## Legislation could change locals' payout for Del. 1 tolls

By State Rep. Dick Cathcart  
R - Middletown

Among the most frequent calls that I receive from my constituents concerns the cost of the tolls along the new State Route 1. The Department of Transportation has now established two main toll plazas along the span, as well as several exit tolls. It is safe to say that commuters are frustrated.

Commuters could travel less than 50 miles one way and pay almost \$2 in tolls. That may not seem like a lot of money, but it quickly adds up. Commuters traveling from north of the C & D Canal to Dover often find themselves shelling out \$4 a day, \$20 a week, and before you know it, \$1,000 a year — just in tolls.

Residents who live within a few miles of the highway and those people who regularly commute to jobs in northern New Castle County and Kent County are often the most burdened. Because of the tolls, commuters are actually being discouraged to use the new Route 1.

Within the next week, I will be introducing legislation to address this issue. The bill that I plan to sponsor will provide an equitable toll system discount for certain Route 1 travelers. Under the legislation, DelDOT will be required to establish a toll discount of 75 percent for users of the new E-Z pass who reside in Delaware within one mile of a Route 1 toll collection site.

The bill also will offer a discount of 50 percent for E-Z pass users who live in Delaware and commute for employment in Kent or New Castle Counties by means of Route 1. The discount will be for five round trips per week or 250 round trips per year.

Because of federal requirements, the state is not permit-



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ted to completely eliminate the toll along Route 1. With that in mind, I do believe it is important to take the necessary steps to help reduce the financial burden placed on motorists.

By providing toll discounts, I think the use of the highway will actually increase. Lower tolls, like lower taxes, will generate more revenue for the state by increasing utilization.

The local residents have been affected the most by the construction of this new road. These motorists, in order to avoid paying a toll when traveling just a few miles within their homes, suffer the greatest inconvenience. It is more of an inconvenience for them to travel the existing Route 13 to get around.

It is my opinion that Route 1 was built to offer a quicker, more direct route for some motorists, including those beach-goers who live outside of Delaware. I believe my proposal will offer much needed relief in toll costs for motorists frequently traveling Route 1. I look forward to the passage of this legislation.